

Still no peace in Darfur
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Apart from former U.N. envoy John Danforth, the two political voices that have spoken the loudest about the strife in the Darfur region of western Sudan have been Sens. Jon S. Corzine, D-N.J., and Sam Brownback, R-Kan. This bipartisan duo wrote last year's Senate resolution declaring that the atrocities in Darfur were genocide. While the world's eyes have since turned to tsunami victims in South Asia, the senators caution that now isn't the time to divert attention from an equally compelling crisis in Darfur.

We can send all the goodwill we like, pray for the victims and give generously to charitable organizations. But the real test by which the United States and Europe will and must be judged, the senators say, is whether they did enough to stop genocide in Darfur.

Danforth and others deserve much credit for helping Sudan end the 22-year-old war between the Islamic government in the north and the predominantly Christian south. But there's no certainty this "permanent cease-fire," signed on Dec. 31, will bring lasting peace to Darfur.

Violence erupted there nearly two years ago as part of tension over scarce resources, as is often the case in Africa. Having no voice in Sudan's government is one cause of the rebellion of ethnic Africans in Darfur. But rather than respond to this and other grievances, the Sudanese government has used its Janjaweed militia to crush the rebellion. Janjaweed attacks have displaced some 1.4 million people, killed 30,000 to 70,000 and made tens of thousands more vulnerable to malnutrition and disease.

The Sudanese government must not be rewarded for helping end the north-south conflict unless it addresses the grievances in Darfur and reins in the Janjaweed. It also must give humanitarian groups unrestricted access to parts of Darfur hit by malnutrition and disease. Time and again, the government has promised to take these steps and then reneged, knowing the U.N. Security Council will look the other way. The United States and Europe must pressure China to join other Security Council members and impose tough sanctions against Sudan. China, a chief importer of oil from Sudan, has balked.

In spite of Sudan's intransigence, recent trends elsewhere in Africa offer hope that this conflict can be defused. The same week that Sudan and insurgents signed the cease-fire, Uganda and Senegal moved toward reconciliation with rebel groups. Civil wars in Angola and Liberia, Ethiopia and Eritrea also have ended. The United States and Europe must work harder to promote peace in Sudan. They can start, as the senators note, by stopping the slaughter.

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